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ISRAELI BRUTALITY: A young Muslim protester at a Jan. 9 demonstration (see pages 12-13) in south Texas holds a disturbing poster-photo of a decapitated child, apparently killed in Gaza by Israeli forces in the current offensive in Palestine.

PHOTO BY ANGIE & MARK ANDERSON

Israel's Secret Relationship With Hamas

By Michael Collins Piper

The *Washington Post* has finally acknowledged— albeit buried in an "analysis" on its back pages—the explosive and little-known point first made by *American Free Press* as long ago as Oct. 29, 2001 (and later on July 8, 2002 and Feb. 13, 2006): that Israel had a secret agenda vis-à-vis Islamic fundamentalist groups such as Hamas, that Israel had a long, well-documented history of propping up Islamic fundamentalism (including terrorist organizations) for its own purposes.

Writing in the *Post* on January 7, 2009, the newspaper's foreign correspondent Glenn Kessler revealed:

> In the 1980s . . . the Israeli government decided to weaken the secular Fatah movement headed by Palestine Liberation Organization [PLO] Chairman Yasser Arafat by promoting the rise of Islamic parties as a counterweight, on the theory that Islamic groups would not have the same nationalistic impulses. So Fatah's social networks were dismantled by the Israeli government, but it went easy on Islamic charitable networks. This decision fueled the rise of Hamas as a political force, with its network of health clinics and social services that far exceeded the abilities of the often-corrupt Fatah movement. . . .

Israel now wants to make a peace deal with Mahmoud Abbas, the Palestinian authority president who heads Fatah but has no control over Gaza. So one of the Israeli aims in Gaza today is to weaken Hamas enough that it can no longer be a political rival to Fatah in Gaza —the opposite of what Israel hoped to achieve decades ago with its efforts to encourage the rise of Islamic groups.

In short, behind-the-scenes schemers in Israel saw Hamas in its earliest days as a counter-balance against any Palestinian moves for peace. In other words, as long as Hamas had enough influence, it might prevent the peace process with the "moderate" forces of secular Palestinian statesman Yasser Arafat (leader of Fatah) from going forward.

While many good people do not understand why Israel would not want peace, Israel's intrigues serve at least three purposes: 1) preserving internal conflict within the Palestinian movement; 2) giving Israel the opportunity to claim that the peace process could not go forward because "Arafat and the PLO control the extremist elements" and 3) perpetuating overall Middle East conflict, which has always been Israel's motivation, preferring to see its Arab neighbors divided —quarreling with one another—thereby unable to check Israel's regional desires.

All of this is not to suggest that Hamas is somehow a secret "tool" of Israel—as some naïve folks have suggested. Far from it. In fact, Hamas clearly captured the support of many Palestinians (Muslim and Christian alike) who do not necessarily share Hamas' Islamic focus. And after Hamas won a democratic election in taking control of the Palestinian Authority in 2002, Israel saw the proverbial "blowback."

On June 28, 2002, veteran UPI correspondent Richard Sale confirmed what AFP had already reported regarding Israel's manipulation of Islamic fundamentalist forces. Sale focused on Israel's intrigues regarding Hamas. Sale cited not only a variety of named and un-named past and present U.S. government officials but also documents obtained by UPI from the Israel-based Institute for Counter-Terrorism.

Noting that Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon was vowing to fight "Palestinian terror" and declaring Hamas as "the deadliest terrorist group that we have ever had to face," Sale noted wryly that "Sharon left something out."

That "something," according to Sale, was that while Israel and Hamas were then currently locked in deadly combat, "according to several current and former U.S. intelligence officials, beginning in the late 1970s, Tel Aviv gave direct and indirect financial aid to Hamas over a period of years." So the fact is that Israel's activities laid the groundwork for the crisis that now rages in Gaza.

Sale pointed out that Hamas was actually legally registered as an Islamic social and religious entity in Israel in 1978 and that U.S. administration officials said that funding for Hamas came from not just the oil-producing Arab states but "directly and indirectly from Israel."

While the PLO itself was secular, promoting Palestinian nationalism, Hamas was intent upon setting up a transnational state ruled by the tenets of Islam.

Sale also cited an unnamed former senior CIA official saying that Israel's support for Hamas "was a direct attempt to divide and dilute support for a strong, secular PLO by using a competing religious alternative."

Sale cited Tony Cordesman, a respected veteran Mideast analyst associated with the Center for Strategic Studies, who said that Israel "aided Hamas directly—the Israelis wanted to use it as a counterbalance to the PLO."

Then, when the PLO moved its base of operations to Beirut, Hamas began growing in influence in the Israeli-occupied West Bank.

All of these elements converged at exactly the time when Israel was funding Hamas. However, even the growing strength and independence of Hamas did not deter the Israelis from supporting them.

A U.S. government official—who asked not to be named—told Sale that "The thinking on the part of some of the right-wing Israeli establishment was that Hamas and the others, if they gained control, would refuse to have any part of the peace process and would torpedo any agreements put in place. Israel would still be the only democracy in the region for the U.S. to deal with."

In other words, Israel wanted to prop up and promote Hamas as ameans of undermining the influence of Yasser Arafat and the PLO and thereby disrupting the very real peace initiatives being made by Arafat.

Israel wanted an unending state of war in order to be able to continue to justify its occupation of theWest Bank and Gaza and—inevitably—expand Israel's borders into what is known as "Greater Israel."

Thus, the Israelis sponsored—as they soon discovered— a movement that quickly grew out of control.

Although the Israelis sought to manipulate Hamas from within—penetrating it with Israeli spies—independent-minded Hamas leaders weeded out Israeli collaborators.

Hamas thus became a self-sustaining, popularly backed movement that emerged as a very real threat to Israel, to the extent that any such movement could be a threat to the well-armed and U.S.-backed Zionist state.

Sale pointed out that Israel's posturing and manipulation "disgusts" U.S. analysts who have watched Israel's initial nurturing of the very groups that Israel now demands that the United States and the world wage war against on Israel's behalf.

Now Israel is crying that "we are under siege and fighting back to protect our people," the fact is that it is the Palestinian Christians and Muslims who are under siege. The truth is that three times as many Palestinians as Israelis have died during the past ten years.

And while many Americans somehow have been convinced that Hamas are "the bad guys" and that its rival, Fatah, are "the good guys who want peace with Israel," some of Israel's leading publicists on American soil are not so subtly saying that even Fatah is a possible danger to Israel. For example, "neo-conservative" propagandist Clifford May, writing in the*Washington Times* on Jan. 11, asserted that even though Fatah may be hoping—even helping—Israel in its campaign against Hamas, "it doesn't mean Fatah will henceforth [have] good will and a spirit of compromise toward Israel." In other words: Israel will deal with Fatah after it is done wiping Hamas off the map.

Michael Collins Piper can be heard every week day night live on the Internet at republicbroadcasting.org. He is the author of ***Final Judgment***, the controversial "underground bestseller" documenting the collaboration of Israeli intelligence in the assassination of John F. Kennedy. He is also the author of ***The High Priests of War***, ***The New Jerusalem: Zionist Power in America*** , ***The Judas Goats: The Enemy Within***, ***Dirty Secrets: Crime, Conspiracy & Cover-Up in the 20th Century***, ***The GOLEM: Israel's Hell Bomb***, and ***Target: Traficant.*** These works can be found at America First Books and First Amendment Books: 1-888-699-NEWS. He has lectured on suppressed topics in places as diverse as Malaysia, Japan, Canada, Russia and Abu Dhabi.

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